

THE ORGANIZER

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Franklin and Nicollet Starbucks Goes Union!

Baristas from the Starbucks Coffee located at the intersection of Nicollet and Franklin Avenues in Minneapolis walked off the floor Wednesday morning to present a petition to management, signed by more than 500 concerned customers and community members, demanding Starbucks hire a security guard to ensure the safety of its patrons and partners. The workers in turn declared their affiliation with the Starbucks Workers Union, becoming the first Starbucks in Minneapolis, and the second in Minnesota, to go union.

A press conference was then held on Thursday in front of the store to celebrate the solidarity of the workers and demand that Starbucks hire a security guard. The workers were supported by several friends and fellow workers from the IWW who were in attendance.

Initially, the workers circulated an internal petition, compiling signatures from most of the store's employees, requesting a meeting to discuss the security situation. For weeks, they were told that regional management was "discussing" the problem, and "taking it very seriously." Still management refused to arrange a store meeting to even discuss the possibility of a security guard, or any other solutions. After receiving no productive response from either the store or district manager, the employees turned to the customers for more support.

Nancy Athanassellis is a regular customer known to everyone at the store. She comes from Northeast



Minneapolis specifically to visit the Franklin and Nicollet Starbucks daily because of the strong sense of community in the store. Still, she, like the workers, is well aware of the security problems, and was gratified to see someone finally

reports filed for the immediate area surrounding Starbucks. On August 3, the McDonald's restaurant located two blocks south of Starbucks was held up at gun point. On November 3, the Money Xchange less than one block from Starbucks was robbed at knife-point at 8:30 in the morning.

After the press conference, the response by management against the workers was swift. The following day, the District manager for Franklin and Nicollet, and 12 other Minneapolis and Edina stores, informed the store manager that she would transferred to a store in Hopkins - by the very next monday. Such a sudden transfer is almost unheard of. She

was replaced by the openly anti-union manager from City Center, who thinks he, as a manager, represents most workers in saying "we don't need a union."

doing something about the problem. "The baristas are very busy running the store. It shouldn't be up to them to take care of security problems, but that is what ends up happening. If Starbucks is not going to look at the human aspect, they should at least look at how much time they spend dealing with security," she said.

Since the beginning of 2008, there have been more than 500 police

The next anti-worker action came on Sunday and Monday, when fellow worker Bliss Benson was the only of many workers who were written up for being late to a store meeting, and for being "unprofessional" at the meeting,

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THE ORGANIZER

A monthly publication of the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World.

The IWW is a union for all workers, dedicated to organizing on the job for better conditions today, and a world without bosses tomorrow.

You are invited to contact the Branch Secretary-Treasurer or any Delegate listed below for no-pressure conversations about your issues on the job.

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Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed are not necessarily the official position of the local branch or the union as a whole.

Many of our members are engaged in active organizing campaigns, and some use an alias, occasionally their union card number, or 'x' number. We prefer transparency over secrecy whenever possible, but will always honor requests for anonymity.

Editorial

Another Starbucks in Minnesota went union this month, with workers pairing their announcement with an action to improve security at their store. In Chicago, as I write this, workers at Republic Windows and Doors just won a labor dispute by engaging in a factory occupation. Greek anarchists are in full-scale revolt against the police, who murdered a teenager in the streets a few days ago. Canadians are attempting to defeat a neo-fascist government (go ahead, google Stephen Harper) by rallying in the streets of major cities, including Montreal. Those are just some of the movements that are underfoot and crossing my mind at the moment. It's on, people.

Yes, Obama won. And immediately started appointing Clinton-era neoliberals to his bloated cabinet. Some are spinning this as a Lincoln-esque "team of rivals" cabinet, while others see it as a relatively straightforward expression of the new American empire, in smarter dress and politer speech. Obama made one good move this week, when he announced his support for the workers at the Republic Windows factory.

But what are the politicians really saying? Obama and the politicians are not making the proper claims: that Republic and the banks are parasitic criminal enterprises, impoverishing their workers and the citizens of the United States. Instead of identifying the precise mechanisms through which bosses suck the wealth out of their employees, or by describing the bailouts the government engineers for the banking sectors while denying to productive sectors, like Detroit, these politicians are reacting to worker initiatives and expressing their support in fuzzy terms.

When Argentina's economy began its rapid fall in 2001 (a consequence the neo-liberal economic regimes perpetuated by many members of Obama's new cabi-

net), Argentinians from all classes began to withdraw their money from the banks, which responded by refusing to let the citizens have their money. The consequent political crisis toppled multiple governments in a matter of months; Argentinian workers, many of whom were not particularly radical before the crisis, occupied factories and continued to produce after owners abandoned both factories and payrolls. Some of those projects succeeded and continue, in spite of repression and legal shenanigans from the former owners, who, like the owners of Republic, closed down in order to preserve their own wealth by impoverishing their employees.

We cannot rely on the boss, the politicians, or the lawyers, to save us. The workers at Republic know this - without their severance, they might not feed their families or keep the heat on in Chicago's brutal winter. They didn't wait for others, but took the initiative, forcing the bosses and the politicians to respond to them. We need to support their brave stand, and we need to replicate it. Organization, like that taking place in the IWW/SWU campaigns in Starbucks all over the world, must take priority. Direct action, like that taking place so dramatically and effectively in Republic Windows and Doors' Factory right now, must be the tactic of organized workers. And revolt, like that taken by Greek anarchists and communities in Athens and elsewhere in Greece, must follow every assault on our lives and liberties.

-FW Errico Hedake

What 'Abolishing the Wage System' Means

As a Wobbly, I often hear and use the term "abolition of the wage system". For those of us in the IWW; that concept is fairly easy to grasp, and is the ultimate goal towards which we all work.

As a dual-card member, I also have regular contact with trade union staff and with the workers represented by those trade unionists. For these people, "abolition of the wage system" is often perceived as being either gibberish or sedition. There is an obvious clash between the goals of trade unions and those of solidarity unions such as the IWW. Few things exemplify those differences more clearly than how we look at the idea of the wage system. Yet, trade unions are filled with workers just like us...workers who have a right to be recognized and compensated for the real value of the work they do. If we want to reach the critical mass necessary to abolish the wage system, we need to bring these workers with us. And to do that we need to recognize how they interact with their trade unions and how these workers differ from Wobblies in the way they view themselves as union members.

To understand those differences, we need to start with understanding how trade unions work. Modern trade unions in the United States are empowered by the federal government primarily via the National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act) of 1935 and a group of amendments known as the Labor-Management Relations Act (Taft-Hartley Act) which passed congress in 1947. Proponents of the Wagner Act argued that this was a pro-labor act which solidified the right of workers to organize unions. In reality, the Wagner Act was an act of desperation by the capitalist system which served to drain the militancy from worker-driven unions.

The Wagner Act was passed the year after a series of bitter direct-action strikes in Minneapolis, Toledo, San Francisco, and elsewhere had threatened to undo the whole system. With the Wagner Act, the bosses and politicians could see to it that unions would now be run by a group of professional union employees. These union employees were given the sole authority to act on behalf of the workers they represent. This means that they negotiate contracts, agree to wage structures, file grievances, etc. Many of these "professional" unionists are corrupt, others are sincere but caught-up in a system far beyond their control. It is a legitimate argument as to whether trade unions have done more harm than good to workers; and undoubtedly, some trade unions have worked for, and continue to fight for the basic interests of their members. Yet, by acquiescing

to the system put in place by politicians and their corporate overseers; trade unions have, ultimately, sold out the very workers they represent. This is the union environment recognized by members of trade unions.

Trade union members are deliberately kept in the dark about everything from contract negotiations to union budgets. The idea is to create a group of workers who simply follow the direction of union staffers, refrain from asking questions, and fall in line with the obligations defined in their con-

tract.

All of which brings us back to the idea of wages. When trade unions negotiate a contract, the first priority is typically the setting of wage structures. The biggest problem with the wage system is that wages are completely arbitrary. The wage any of us receives is dependent upon a number of factors including; what we do, where we live, when we work, and how the employer/union have classified our position.

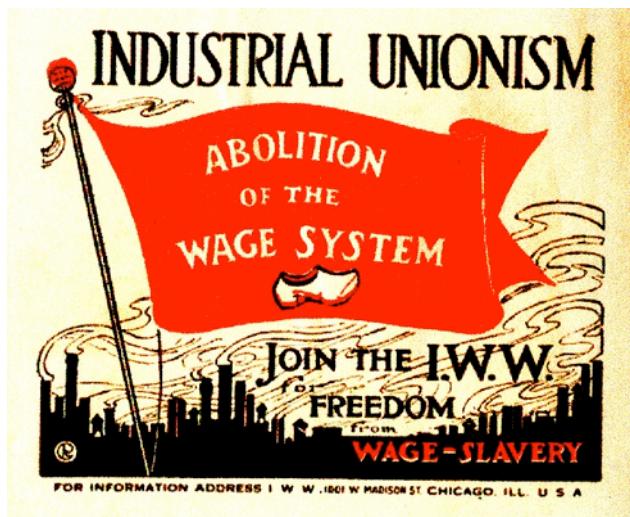
For example, under my trade union contract, a "full-time" employee at top scale and working 32 hours a week, earns about \$22.00 an hour...with relatively generous benefits. A "part-time" employee working 32 hours a week and doing exactly the same job, may earn as little as \$7.00 an hour...with considerably reduced benefits. The only difference between the two workers is how the employer and the union have agreed to categorize these employees during contract negotiations. Along with the basic inequality of this structure to the individual workers involved, there is a more expansive type of damage that is occurring: the death of worker solidarity. How likely is it that someone making \$22.00 an hour would risk striking over a 50 cent raise for those making 7.00 an hour? And would that part-time worker be inclined to forgo their meager income in order to act in solidarity with a full-timer who wants more money added to their pension fund? The wage system creates a class structure within the workplace, a division which is intentionally designed to prevent workers from acting in common interest.

tracts. They are encouraged to view the trade union as a means of fighting for their piece of the corporate pie. What those workers seldom recognize, is that the interests of trade union officers and staff are usually at odds with the interests of the workers themselves.

However we view trade unions as a concept, the reality is that they are, by design, anti-democratic. Trade unions vary in the amount of control passed down to their workers, but all of them are hierarchically structured to concentrate power in the hands of a few officers who often achieve their positions non-democratically. Many of these union officers and staff members receive pay which is comparable to that of the corporate officers with whom they

We all know that the wage system is in place to benefit corporate and political interests. It's there to insure that the relationship between employers and employees runs smoothly for the

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Support the RNC8 and the Other RNC Arrestees

I'm writing as a member of the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World to encourage my fellow workers to support the eight local activists charged with "Conspiracy to Riot in Furtherance of Terrorism" for organizing infrastructure for protestors during the 2008 Republican National Convention and the others who are still fighting RNC-related charges. Let me first say that my primary reason for supporting the RNC8 and the other RNC arrestees is a matter of principle. But beyond the obvious reason that it's the right thing to do, I want to take the opportunity to encourage my fellow workers to think about the strategic importance of supporting the arrestees as well.

The Industrial Workers of the World is a union -not a solidarity club- and the organizing that we do directly in our workplaces and communities is our *raison d'être*. I'm very proud of the work we've been able to accomplish since I've been a member of the branch for about one and a half years. Nonetheless, the organizing that I've been a part of has also taught me that solidarity is our only weapon and our defense. We too have faced ugly state repression in collusion with the bosses and there is no reason to think that the state won't come down even harder on us in the future if the charges against other organizers and protestors stick.

The right to organize and the right to free speech are both in peril and that will affect our ability to organize. These are rights that the IWW has always fought for (with a great deal of success) even under the most repressive circumstances. Many of you are probably aware that the IWW was nearly crushed during a similar wave of vicious repression against radicals around World War I, including the complete destruction of the IWW up in northern Minnesota. Hundreds of wobblies faced vigilante violence and serious prison sentences for speaking out against the war, for "conspiring" to use direct action on the job (i.e. for advocating "criminal syndicalism"), and generally for being a threat to the rule of the bosses and the politicians. It is critical that we continue to fight for the right to organize and the right to free speech in the neoliberal, post-9/11 era when these rights are brazenly being violated by corporations and the state.

Supporting the RNC arrestees is an important occasion to stand up for those rights again in our own community as we continue to fight for the right to organize on the job. The repression faced by the anti-capitalist bloc and individual wobblies during the RNC was part of a larger government initiative to squash dissent and the right to organize. We need to stand with the other groups and individuals who were also

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Solidarity Unionism

These are hard times so let us be bold and to the point. The financial crisis of 2008 is a symptom of a deeper crisis driven by the attempt of capital to free itself from the class struggle. Recall Marx's metaphor of the Wizard who summoned powers beyond control. From its inception, capital has unleashed the creative forces of global labor power even as it sought to escape the resistance of actual working bodies. When the exploitation of labor power requires too much time for capitalism to make a buck, the drive for profit detaches itself from productive labor to generate profit by betting on risk so that money may beget money. Today we witness how the drive for profit through the circulation of finance capital generates an overproduction of debt that requires capitalism to suck up to the State. Under the auspices of free market discourse,

federal and state governments roll back progressive labor legislation, union membership is at an all time low, and to paraphrase Naomi Klein, governments everywhere "privatize the public good and make public private debt" which, to paraphrase Cesare Casarino, is simply another way of saying that if you believe in capital you believe in nothing.

We believe in something. We believe in the solidarity of all waged and unwaged members of the working class that have to rent their labor power in order to gain access to a means of subsistence. For us, the principle of solidarity is based on the necessary being-togetherness implied in the concept of labor power; that is to say, we are one flesh because we work in the world

together. As in Staughton Lynd's metaphor of the family, you do not expect my help to advance your career because one day I may be in need of your help to advance my career; I help you because we are part of the common ontology of labor. Again, to paraphrase Lynd, if you lay down your tools I lay down mine because your injury is my injury too.

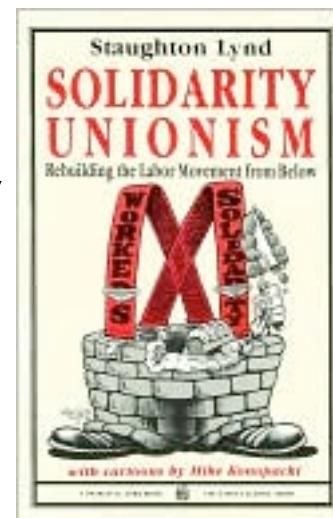
This vision of solidarity is also a means to win; not to beg for concessions from the enemy in defeat—but rather, to realize the bold vision of an equally bold statement taken from the preamble to the Industrial Workers of the World: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common." If we wish to win we

must make the most difficult realization that our power is in our capacity to work and to withhold our work as often as necessary when and where it is demanded of us. We do not do this primarily by political activism—that is, unwaged labor on behalf of the struggles of others. We do this by creating unions.

We must immediately qualify what we mean: we do not mean join the dominant trade and business unions in the US—they have done more to manage and regulate industrial struggle than to build working class power. They may be reformed but they may have to be left behind to make way for a more powerful force: the force of the direct action of the working class. Let us be more specific with what we mean by union.

As Fellow Worker Nate Holdren has explained before, a union is a group of workers seeking to permanently alter the balance of power between workers and bosses. A union does not need a contract. A union does not need to have recognition. A union does not require affiliation with one of

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'Wage System', continued from page 3

employer—as opposed to fairly for the employee. Yet, trade union members have been indoctrinated with the notion that the process of wage negotiation is worker empowerment. It is such an entrenched part of our economy that few people can even imagine another way. Each of us; whether IWW, trade union member, or non-organized worker needs to deal with the realities of the system until we can overthrow it. Among other things, that often means working in some kind of loose alliance with trade unions in an effort to get the best conditions we can for workers. We need to bear in mind that members of trade unions are often exploited by their own unions in addition to the abuses they receive from their employers. As Wobblies, we can still form solidarity with those workers. When we do actions which may involve trade unions, we do it for the workers...all workers. We need to maintain close connections with trade union members, even as we maintain our wariness of the trade unions themselves. The worst that can happen is that we instill those workers with a dose of militancy that will allow them to force change within their trade unions. We might even be able to "Wobblify" some of them!

—FW Bob Adams

SBUX Workers, continued from page 1

which, according to the new store manager, was charged simply because the district manager does not "like" Bliss. These disciplinary actions were thinly veiled acts of retaliation against the union and all store workers for the concerted activities going on at the store. Unfortunately for management, they backfired badly, as Bliss Benson was scared enough to immediately join the union for increased protection.

Additionally, the management finally did agree to set up a store meeting to discuss—with one week's notice and only five minutes on the agenda devoted to hearing out workers' concerns. At the meeting, management continued their strategy of making excuses, shifting blame, feigning concern, and outright lying about action taken.

Even so, the workers remain hopeful that they will win this fight. "We joined the union because we have to work together continuously to improve our working conditions," said worker Aaron Kocher. "We have not given up on this issue and we will not."

The workers are excited to be joining the Starbucks Workers Union, with members from stores all over the country, and the Industrial Workers of the World, with 2000 members worldwide. They know they are joining something much bigger than themselves, empowering workers to stop merely settling for whatever they can get.

— FWs Aaron Kocher and Brendan O'Donnell

Second Annual Red November/Black November Fall Festival A Success!

On November 22nd, the Twin Cities Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World held our second annual Red November/Black November Fall Feast at the Walker church in Minneapolis. It was a fun, educational, and community-building event for wobblies and our families, friends, and supporters. We began the evening with some delicious food followed by a program of songs, organizing report-backs, stand-up comedy, an anti-capitalist bloc kids skit, and a round of toasts. At least 25 people participated in the program out of the 60 in attendance, which demonstrates the participatory character of the IWW.

We had three longer presentations on some of the key projects of the branch over the last year—a campaign against D'Amicos and Sons restaurant chain for racist firings of immigrant workers who had received no-match letters, the anti-capitalist bloc at the Republican National Convention, and the Starbucks Workers Union which now has two public union shops in the Twin Cities! We also heard numerous shorter reports from other members of the branch about the great work we have all been doing both in our workplaces and in our communities. We used the toasts as an opportunity to affirm one another and the great organizing we have been able to accomplish together. We ended the evening with a rousing rendition of Solidarity Forever in true wobbly fashion.

The purpose of the event was to build community, to reflect on what the branch has accomplished over the last year and where we are headed, and of course to have fun! November has long been observed as a month of remem-

brance and reflection in the labor movement. It is a time for us to learn from the history of the struggles we carry on in the present, to draw strength from their legacies, and to appreciate the sacrifices we have all made to make the world a better place for working people.

November is a month to celebrate the innumerable gains we have won through struggle but also to heal and support one another as we move forward. Faced with the increased repression of the Twin Cities radical community during and after the RNC, this November was a particularly important time to come together in the face of repression, to support one another, and to learn from our legacy of struggle.

We had a great turnout so thanks to everyone who came, especially those who helped with set-up and clean-up, food prep, and those brave enough to participate in the program. While Red November/Black November was not intended as a fundraiser, we were able to net a small profit for the branch and to sell some of the great new stuff from the Lit department. Most importantly, we were able to learn from one another, to come together as a union to celebrate what we have accomplished, and to foster the culture of solidarity that makes the IWW the best damn union in the world.

— FW Kirsten Kohlhase

Solidarity Unionism, continued from page 4
 the business or trade unions. A union is not segregated by labor markets, crafts, or employment status. A union can happen anytime people who work get together to take direct action on behalf of their own interests. This type of unionism is called solidarity unionism.

Resistance in the age of globalization means building a series of autonomous unions not only in non-union shops, but within union shops, as parallel labor organizations, as informal working groups, as radical office cliques, as any imaginable form of organization in which those who are forced to commit some labor, use that labor as a leverage to dismantle hierarchy and exploitation. The key point of these unions will be autonomous, and self managed, organized to take direct action where change counts.. We may organize to show support for others and we should. But we will not win unless we take the initiative of self-management and direct action into our own sites of labor. Let us conclude with a few details of what solidarity unionism would entail for organizing a union:

No dues check-off. Dues check-off is a system that allows a union to subtract dues from a worker's paycheck, often eliminating personal contact between the worker and the union. Solidarity unions will be based entirely on the relationships built between workers. Delegates would also be workers, ideally granting all decision making power to the workers themselves.

Contracts are tactical. A contract gives up management decisions to the boss and may eliminate the possibility for a legal strike during the duration of the contract. Both prevent the autonomous initiative of working class struggle in the form of the wildcat. The desire for recognition and a contract are not ends-in-themselves, but moments for reflexivity to expand our power

Universal Transfer. This means one union one card. Membership in the union should be good no matter where you work. The card should also be good for unwaged workers who should also organize around the reproduction of social relations and affects which sustain the activity of living labor.

We may then turn our gaze to communication, not only as a tactic of representation that gains value as a practice of mediation, but as an optic for understanding the compositional processes of direct action and as a site of struggle for which we grow in common to abolish the wage.

— FW Matt May & Ron Greene
Delivered at the 2008 National Communication Association Conference in San Diego

A Marxist Take on the Current Implosion of Capitalism

To more fully understand the world-wide financial crisis, one could do well to view the very informative video presentation online by Rick Wolff entitled "Capitalism Hits the Fan: A Marxian View. This is available online at <http://tinyurl.com/5ohhsq>

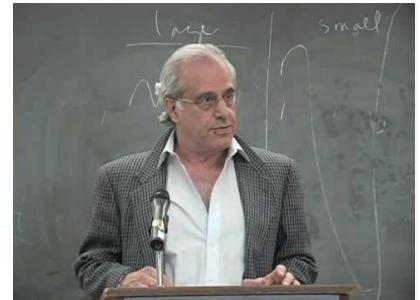
According to Wolff, from 1820 to 1970, increasing wages of American Worker relative to productivity. This ended around 1970 - 1975. Thereafter, workers' productivity has increased, but workers' wages have remained stagnant. In real purchasing power, wages currently are below that of workers in 1970.

So, the last 30 to 40 years has been the leveling out of a 150 year increase in wages. As Wolff so eloquently puts it, "The consumption joy is finished." The difference between flat wages and massively increased productivity is what the employing class realizes, the stolen profit. Employers and all those with their fingers on the profits - professionals, shareholders, financiers, banks, etc. have reaped a fantastic bonanza of income from money stolen from those who actually do the work.

Since our "worth" as defined by capitalist culture in what we "consume," workers have tried to find ways out of the dilemma. There are two ways that workers have tried to go about this—

1. Find more work - second jobs, longer work hours, etc. The number of hours worked by American workers per year has risen about 20% per worker since the 1970s. Interestingly, European and other populations have during the same period reduced number of hours worked by about the same percentage. So, American workers have basically been worked to exhaustion. Also, families start sending other members out to

work - wives, children, retirees. But with this added income have the added price of expenses associated with work - transportation, clothing, daycare, not to mention time. So, families began falling apart.



2. Since finding more work did not sustainably solve the problem of finding a way to increase consumption, the working class went on a borrowing spree, finally racking up the highest amount of debt of any class during any portion of history.

So, what we have essentially is the owner class collecting double on you and on me. The owners have realized fantastic profit on the increased production over the stagnant wages, then they turn around and lend money to us and earn even *more profit on the consumption

which we are told is intrinsic to our "worth" as human beings.

This was a system built to fail. The sub-prime mortgage crisis is founded on a population of people who are exhausted because they cannot work any more and are emotionally unable to continue under the current system of supporting their debt. These people are by the millions walking away from their obligations and the house of cards is coming down.

— FW Michelle Rockne

The Sit-Down Strike and Victory at Republic Windows and Doors

Historically, one of the most potent forms of direct labor action is the sit-down strike. In his book, *Bread and Roses: Mills, Migrants, and the Struggle for the American Dream*, Bruce Watson credits the IWW with being the first union to use this tactic. A sit-down strike is the literal taking over and occupying of the workplace by employees. Probably the most famous sit-down strike in history occurred at the General Motors Fisher #1 plant in Flint, Michigan in 1936. The United Auto Workers was attempting to organize the entire auto industry, and the Flint strike was for union recognition. This sit-down strike lasted for about six weeks. During that time, strikers maintained the plant while other workers on the outside maintained a supply-line of food for those on the inside. The strike began on December 30th, 1936. On January 11, 1937, the police assaulted the plant in an effort to enforce a court order for the workers' removal from the premises. The strikers used fire hoses and hurled auto parts at the police. After six hours the police retreated. The strike ended on February 11th when the workers fight for union recognition succeeded. It should be noted that "progressive" president Franklin D. Roosevelt gave no support to the striking workers.

This is the kind of worker-driven action that used to take place routinely in this country. In fact, there were over six hundred sit-down strikes of at least one day's length in the United States between 1936 and 1939. In 1939, The United States Supreme Court was asked to interpret the legality of the sit-down strike under The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). In *NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] v. Fansteel Metallurgical Corporation*; the court ruled that workers who "illegally occupy" their workplaces are not only criminally liable under state trespass laws, but they are also subject to unconditional termination by their employers. The court also ruled that the employer's right to fire any worker who participated in a sit-down strike remained intact even if the workers were reacting to an unfair labor practice as defined under the NLRA.

In the last seventy years, we haven't seen very many sit-down strikes in The United States. Through a combination of anti-worker labor laws and ineffective or even corrupt business union practices; the militancy has been sapped from the American worker. Self-respect has been replaced by fear.

All of which brings us to the workers at Republic Windows and Doors. They were members of local 110 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE). About seventy-five percent of them are Latin American immigrants. The remainder of the workforce is primarily African-American. Many of these workers had been there for two or three decades, and this had become a decent middle-class job for those workers.

On December 2nd, workers were given a three day notice that the plant was closing for good. They had suspected that something was about to happen because machinery from the production lines had been slowly disappearing. The workers talked about the possibility of being arrested if they took over the plant. After all, they would be trespassing on private property.

This country doesn't provide much in the way of legal rights for the working class; but, under federal law, workers are entitled to a sixty day notice of closure. These workers had mortgages and rent to pay, they had food and gas to buy, and they had family medical bills. It would have been easy for them to just cut their losses and start over, but somehow these workers were able to reach inside and find the courage and the dignity that lies buried in the soul of every worker. They decided to fight back...they decided to physically take possession of their workplace. They had only one demand, and it was a simple one: "pay us what you owe us". Republic Windows decided it would be convenient to blame the current economic crisis, so they pointed to Bank of America and the bank's

elimination of the company's credit line.

Initially, Bank of America balked at providing any credit for the purpose of paying workers. But, in an economic crisis in which the bank had received a twenty-five billion dollar welfare check from the US government, it finally decided that providing the loan to Republic would be prudent damage control. The deal nearly fell through when Republic CEO and majority owner, Richard Gillman demanded that the loan cover the lease payments on his fleet of luxury cars, as well as eight weeks of his salary (\$225,000.00 a year). For purposes of media consumption, Gillman talked of how troubling this closure was to him: "This has been the worst week of my life. I know many of those workers at Republic personally, and I put 34 years of my life into that business, and all my money, too. No stone was left unturned in our effort to save Republic".

Yet, while Republic Windows and Doors was preparing to file for bankruptcy and leave their workers with nothing, Gillman did have a contingency plan—for himself, at least. According to the Illinois Secretary of State's office, Gillman and friends filed papers to incorporate a new company on November 18th. That company is called Echo Windows LLC. Echo Windows also purchased a window and door manufacturing plant in Red Oak, Iowa. Not surprisingly, the new plant is entirely non-union.

We shouldn't waste our time singling out either Republic or Bank of America. They are siblings in a system of mutual greed which thrives on the blood and sweat of the working class. The workers at Republic Windows and Doors found that out, and they engaged in the kind of direct action that was once the heart of the labor movement. Like many of the most activist workers throughout la

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Direct Action Roundup

University of Minnesota:

Organizing continues in two campaigns around the University of Minnesota. Both student and non-student workers are organizing for better conditions on the job. Members are teaching organizing skills over lunch and preparing publicity campaigns to draw attention to issues of workers on the job.

Sandwich Shop:

Workers at a sandwich chain are picking up steam in their campaign for better wages, conditions and union recognition. Shops around the Twin Cities are coordinating on social events and job actions, building support and solidarity across the chain.

Starbucks Workers Union:

After gathering hundreds of signatures from Starbucks workers, customers, and community members, SWU organizers presented a petition asking for a security guard to be hired at a store in Minneapolis. Crime is a serious problem for workers, and calling the police every time there's an issue is neither safe for workers nor safe for offenders.

In mid-October at another Starbucks location a "ten minute strike" shop floor action occurred. Workers stopped work in solidarity with a co-worker who had not received her paycheck. After just a few hours, regional manager showed up to sign the check and problem was solved. Union pins continue to be sported by workers on the floor.

Communications Company:

IWW membership has seen tremendous growth in this dual-card shop. Conversation with fellow workers continue to bring in membership and shop floor actions are in gear.

Solidarity with Republic UE Workers

On Wednesday, December 10th, Wobblies handed out leaflets to workers and passersby in front of the US Trust Building in Minneapolis. They got positive reactions from every single person who took a leaflet.

After about 20 minutes of leafletting, they took our message straight to the top, riding the elevator to the 14th Floor and demanded a meeting with the President of the company. The President declined.

– FW Andy Breton

RNC Support, from page 4

targeted in this fierce wave of repression.

While some wobblies may have ideological and/or personal differences with some of the RNC arrestees just as we do with each other, an injury to one truly is an injury to all. It will benefit everyone in the Twin Cities community if we carry on the spirit of the St. Paul Principles by continuing to support one another and work together across our differences when possible. This is an opportunity for all of us to rally together and have each others' backs, which will make us all stronger. While we may have legitimate gripes and important differences, we can choose to be part of building a broader culture of solidarity both within and beyond the union. Actively creating such a culture of solidarity is imperative to the success of our organizing.

Stand up for justice, the right to organize, and the right to free speech!

In our workplaces and our communities,
In the jails and in the streets,
Solidarity can't be beat!
Support the RNC Arrestees!

Here are some things you can do to support the RNC8 and other RNC arrestees:

Sign the petition urging prosecutor (and now gubernatorial candidate) Susan Gaertner to drop the charges.

<http://tinyurl.com/65I68I>

Talk to your coworkers, friends, families, and neighbors so they know about the case and encourage them to support the RNC8.

Sign up for the Friends of the RNC8 email list to get updates on fundraisers, court appearances, and other ways you can help like call-in days and protests. Visit <http://rnc8.org/>

– FW 361162

Republic, from page 7

bor's noble history, these workers were by and large immigrants... people who had to fight for respect in virtually every aspect of their daily lives.

When the Republic workers sat down in the company cafeteria to discuss plans for the workplace occupation; the union's president (who is a maintenance worker at the plant), Armando Robles, asked for a show of hands of those willing to participate. All hands went up as the workers shouted "Sí, se puede!" or "Yes, we can!" After their victory, as they left the plant, they shouted "Yes, we did!"

– FW Bob Adams



Upcoming Events.

IWW New Member Orientations

December 26, 4-5:30 PM

January 10, 1-2:30 PM

Hennepin County East Lake Library at 2727 E Lake Street

General Membership Branch Meeting

January 6 at 7:00 PM

Monthly business meeting for the IWW Twin Cities General membership Branch. Come vote on where your dues are spent! All members have a vote. Mayday Books, 301 Cedar Ave

Organizer Training

January 31 and February 1

A two-day organizing workshop. Come learn and receive pointers on how to build a union at your workplace. Times and location TBD. For more information call (612) 339-1266 or email twincities@iww.org

General Membership Branch Meeting

December 2 at 7:00 PM

Monthly business meeting for the IWW Twin Cities General membership Branch. Come vote on where your dues are spent! All members have a vote. Mayday Books, 301 Cedar Ave